

LT. GOVERNOR JOHN GARAMENDI LAUNCHES CENTRAL VALLEY "LISTENING TOUR" TO FOCUS ON HIGHER EDUCATION SOLUTIONS TO CRITICAL NEEDS OF THE REGION

Diverse gathering of interests at CSU Bakersfield discuss the impact of higher education institutions on the region. Garamendi, a CSU Trustee and UC Regent, plans aggressive initiatives to help universities contribute solutions to critical Valley issues, such as high unemployment, poverty, and unhealthy air quality.

BAKERSFIELD - Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi launched a Central Valley "Listening Tour" Monday in an effort to strengthen higher education's role in resolving critical problems facing the region, including high unemployment, poverty and unhealthy air quality. Garamendi will use information gathered at the forum to develop aggressive initiatives leading to solutions.

"It is my strong belief that the greatness of California was built upon a strong educational system that prepared students to lead their respective communities into the future," the Lt. Governor said. "My goal is to help these institutions develop strategic plans that focus the dynamic energy of the university into a force for job creation, workforce training and economic development."

The "Listening Tour" forum on Monday targeted California State University Bakersfield's role in developing graduates who will constitute the workforce of today as well as develop new industries into the future. Held on campus, it brought business leaders, labor, students, faculty, administrators and the public together to focus on how CSUB contributes to the region, and how that contribution can be amplified.

CSUB President Dr. Horace Mitchell hosted the forum on Monday. "We welcome Trustee Garamendi to CSUB, and support efforts to bring area stakeholders together regarding workforce development needs and strategies in Kern County."

Monday's forum is the first in a series that will be held at institutions of higher learning throughout the Central Valley. On Tuesday, the Lieutenant Governor will visit Fresno State University to hold a similar forum.

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